

WFL's Houston Texans shifted to Shreveport

SHREVEPORT, La. (UPI) — The World Football League moved its financially troubled Houston franchise to Shreveport Wednesday and said it would operate under league administration until the end of the season.

The first game will be played Sept. 25 against the Memphis Southmen in 42,000-seat State Fair Stadium in Shreveport.

Houston's last game as the Texans was Wednesday night against the Birmingham Americans at Birmingham. The team will be renamed before opening its five-game home schedule in Shreveport.

"It's a real big thing for us in the (Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas) area for us to be selected by the World Football League as the site of the franchise," said Mayor Calhoun Allen in announcing the shift to

his city of about 200,000 people.

"There is real interest here. The attitude and the spirit are a great part of Louisiana, Southwest Arkansas and East Texas.

"Without any doubt in my mind at all, we can make this thing go," Allen said.

The Houston franchise had been owned by San Francisco attorney and WFL organizer Steve Arnold, but he reportedly turned the team's ills over to the WFL headquarters three weeks ago and agreed to sell the club.

The team reportedly built up a \$200,000 debt and had a \$1.5 million payroll.

Only 20,000 fans attended the last two home games in Houston.

Team spokesman Wayne Chandler, who attended the Shreveport news conference, said the Texans did not have

enough time to prepare properly for their maiden season.

"I think it was April 10 when they first came into Houston. At that time they didn't have a place to play, they didn't have a coach, they didn't have a single player signed. Most of the other WFL teams had already been pretty well along."

Allen said the league would not sell the team to new owners until the end of the season when Shreveport businessmen would be given the option of buying the franchise.

He said he was certain there would be a Shreveport area group willing to become the owners.

One of the team's big drawing cards in 1975 could be quarterback Craig Morton, who is playing out his option with the Dallas Cowboys of the National Football League and will join the WFL next year.